

Message Text

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ACTION EB-11

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 CAB-09 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00

DOTE-00 INR-11 NSAE-00 RSC-01 FAA-00 PM-07 H-03 L-03

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INFO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

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USMISSION NATO

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FOR ASST SECRETARY ENDERS AND PM DIRECTOR VEST

PASS DEFENSE FOR ISA: ASST SECRETARY ELLSWORTH

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, EAIR, NL

SUBJECT: US/GON CIVIL AVIATION TALKS AND GON

SELECTION OF A REPLACEMENT FIGHTER

REF: THE HAGUE 4422

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: PURPOSE OF THIS MESSAGE IS TO CALL TO ATTENTION OF WASHINGTON POLICY LEVELS POSSIBLE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FORTHCOMING BILATERAL CIVIL AVIATION TALKS WITH THE DUTCH AND THE NETHERLANDS SELECTION OF A REPLACEMENT FIGHTER FOR ITS F-104S.

CIVIL AVIATION TALKS, WHICH US REQUESTED, WILL START IN

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THE HAGUE ON OCTOBER 21 AND ARE AIMED AT OBTAINING GON AGREEMENT TO RESTORE THE BALANCE OF ECONOMIC BENEFIT BY

REDUCING CAPACITY OFFERED BY KLM OVER THE NORTH ATLANTIC. GON SELECTION OF A REPLACEMENT FIGHTER AMONG THE TWO US, ONE FRENCH AND ONE SWEDISH CANDIDATES WILL PROBABLY BE MADE IN JANUARY 1975 FOLLOWING DECISION BY US AIR FORCE AS TO WHICH OF THE TWO US-MADE LIGHT-WEIGHT FIGHTERS TO ORDER FOR ITS INVENTORY. THUS, AVIATION TALKS AND GON DECISION RE REPLACEMENT FIGHTER -- A DECISION WORTH SEVERAL HUNDRED MILLION DOLLARS IN ADDITION TO ITS IMMENSE POLITICAL AND MILITARY SIGNIFICANCE-- WILL FALL IN SAME TIME FRAME. END SUMMARY.

2. DUTCH PRESS HAS ALREADY BEGUN TO PUBLIISH STORIES (REFTEL) ALLEGING US INTENTION TO PRESSURE DUTCH INTO SELECTING US REPLACEMENT FIGHTER BY THREATENING TO LOWER THE BOOM ON THE DUTCH IN THE CIVIL AVIATION TALKS. FACT THAT THERE IS NO FOUNDATION FOR SUCH ALLEGATIONS AND THAT MINISTER OF DEFENSE VREDELING HAS PUBLICLY DENIED ANY INTENTION TO LINK THE TWO QUESTIONS WILL NOT DETER DUTCH PRESS OR ELECTRONIC MEDIA FROM DISTORTING THE SITUATION IN ORDER TO PRODUCE A JUICY STORY THAT ONCE AGAIN PUTS THE US IN A BAD LIGHT. INFLUENTIAL RADICAL PROTESTANT TROUW, IN A FULL-PAGE ARTICLE, HAS JUST MADE ITS CONTRIBUTION TO THIS INCIPIENT CAMPAIGN (SEE SEPTEL FOR SUMMARY) AND OTHER ARTICLES WILL FOLLOW.

3. THERE IS LITTLE WE CAN DO AT THIS STAGE ABOUT THIS MEDIA PROBLEM. WE THINK, HOWEVER, THAT IT WOULD BE USEFUL FOR WASHINGTON TO THINK ABOUT THE SUBSTANCE OF THE PROBLEM AS WE PERCEIVE IT, NAMELY THAT OUR HANDLING OF THE CIVIL AVIATION TALKS NEXT MONTH COULD CONSTITUTE ONE MORE FACTOR AFFECTING THE GON DECISION ON A REPLACEMENT FIGHTER. AT THE OTHER END OF THE SPECTRUM FROM VREDELING IS MINISTER OF TRANSPORTATION AND WATERWAYS WESTERTERP, WHO TOLD THE DCM WITH CHARACTERISTIC SHREWDNESS AND LACK OF PRETENSE THAT IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT FOR HIM, AS MINISTER OF TRANSPORTATION, TO ARGUE IN FAVOR OF THE SELECTION OF AN AMERICAN AIRCRAFT IF THE US HAD APPLIED WHAT, IN DUTCH EYES, APPEARED TO BE UNFAIR PRESSURE IN THE FORTHCOMING CIVIL AIR CONSULTATIONS. WE

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SUSPECT THAT OTHER MINISTERS MAY BE IN A SIMILAR FRAME OF MIND WHEN THE DAY OF DECISION ARRIVES. EVEN IF VREDELING EXCLUDES CIVIL AVIATION TALKS FROM HIS CONSIDERATION OF THE QUESTION, WE CANNOT BE SURE AS OF NOW THAT HE WILL NOT BE UNDULY INFLUENCED BY "EUROPEANIST" FACTORS IN FAVOR OF THE DASSAULT PLANE. FURTHERMORE, WE DOUBT WHETHER VREDELING WILL HAVE OVERRIDING INFLUENCE WITH HIS MINISTERIAL COLLEAGUES, INCLUDING PRIME MINISTER DEN UYL. VREDELING'S STATURE WITHIN THE CABINET WAS NOT ENHANCED BY HIS RECENT CONTROVERSIAL

NEWSPAPER INTERVIEW (THE HAGUE 4244). IN SHORT, THE QUESTION OF A REPLACEMENT FIGHTER FOR THE NETHERLANDS AIR FORCE WILL BE JUDGED TOO IMPORTANT TO BE LEFT SOLELY TO THE MINISTER OF DEFENSE.

4. IN THIS TRICKY SITUATION IT IS OF GREAT IMPORTANCE TO OUR ASPIRATIONS REGARDING THE FIGHETER SALE TO DEMONSTRATE CONCLUSIVELY THAT OUR GRIEVANCE AGAINST KLM ON THE CAPACITY QUESTION IS LEGITIMATE AND OF LONG STANDING, AND THAT WE HOPE AND ANTICIPATE THAT THIS QUESTION WILL BE RESOLVED ON ITS MERITS. AT THE SAME TIME, WE SHOULD CONSIDER WHETHER A SUCCESSFUL NEGOTIATION TO REDRESS THE BALANCE OF CIVIL AIR TRAFFIC PRIOR TO JANUARY 1, 1975, WOULD BE IN THE OVERALL US INTEREST, IF IT SHOULD SOUR THE OFFICIAL AND PUBLIC ATMOSPHERE IN THE NETHERLANDS FOR THE FIGHTER DEAL. EXPERIENCE ARGUES THAT OUR COMPETITORS FOR THE SALE ARE NOT ABOVE EXPLOITING DUTCH SUSPICIONS ABOUT A LINKAGE TO OUR DISADVANTAGE.

5. IN OUR JUDGMENT A POSTPONEMENT OF THE CIVIL AIR CONSULTATIONS AT OUR REQUEST WOULD ONLY SERVE TO CONFIRM DUTCH SUSPICIONS. IN LIEU OF THAT, WASHINGTON MAY WISH TO CONSIDER CONDUCTING THE TALKS IN SUCH A WAY THAT THEY DO NOT RPT NOT CONCLUDE BEFORE A DUTCH DECISION ON THE REPLACEMENT FIGHTER. IF THE LATTER COURSE DOES NOT PROVE FEASIBLE-- AND WE RECOGNIZE THE ECONOMIC AND DOMESTIC POLITICAL IMPERATIVES IN PROMPTLY REDRESSING THE PRESENT SERIOUS IMBALANCE IN ECONOMIC BENEFITS -- OUR BEST COURSE MIGHT THEN BE TO EXPLAIN CAREFULLY AND PUBLICIZE REASONS WHY WE HAVE NO CHOICE

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BUT TO INSIST ON A FAIR AVIATION DEAL WITH THE GON.

6. WE RECOGNIZE THAT WE HAVE ONLY IDENTIFIED A PROBLEM WITHOUT OFFERING A RELIABLE SOLUTION. OUR PURPOSE WILL HAVE BEEN SERVED IF THE APPROPRIATE POLICY LEVELS OF THE USG WEIGH THESE TWO QUESTIONS IN THE CONTEXT OF BASIC AND LONGER-TERM US INTERESTS AND IF THE US DELEGATION TO THE CIVIL AVIAITON TALKS IS INSTRUCTED ACCORDINGLY. WASHINGTON'S COMMENTS WOULD BE APPRECIATED.

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